

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

UTILITIES SERVING THE WHITE EARTH RESERVATION:

Water and Sewer:

The cities of Callaway, Mahnomen and Waubun have water and sewer services available to residents and businesses in their communities. The communities of White Earth, Naytahwaush and Ponsford also have central water and sewer systems that are designed primarily to meet the needs of residential development only. The City of Ogema has a sewer system but no central water system.

Capacities of water and sewer systems on the reservation are shown in the Table below.

Water and Sewer Services on the White Earth Reservation:

	Water System		Sewer System	
	Capacity(GPD)	Average Daily Usage	Capacity(GPD)	Average Daily Usage
Mahnomen	462,000	130,000	247,700	160,000
Waubun	230,000	90,000	70,000	40,000
Callaway	132,000	22,000	43,000	20,000

It is apparent that any new major industrial business development that requires substantial water and sewer services will need to locate in the City of Mahnomen. Mahnomen's water and sewer systems have double the capacity of any other system.

Electricity: Power suppliers on the reservation are:

- Ottertail Power Company
- Wild Rice Electric Cooperative
- Itasca Mantrap Electric Cooperative
- Clearwater/Polk Electric

Natural Gas: None

Heating Fuels: Propane, fuel oil, wood, electricity

TRANSPORTATION:

Access to various modes of transportation is an important factor in economic development, particularly in remote, rural areas such as the reservation.

Transportation facilities are necessary to effectively link people, products, resources and activities, both inside and outside the reservation, with the rest of the world. These transportation facilities include highways, railroads, airports and busing.

Railroads:

Unlike many rural areas of Minnesota, the White Earth Reservation continues to have access to rail transportation. The Soo Line Railroad currently runs on line north/south along U. S. Highway 59 through the cities of Waubun, Mahnomen and Bejou. An average of two to three trains use the rail daily. In addition, unit trains can be loaded in the City of Mahnomen at the Mahnomen Farmers Coop Grain Association.

Highways:

The reservation highways are its most important mode of transportation because it is the primary means that agricultural products are brought to market, people get to and from regional centers, and tourists visit the area.

The most important transportation asset available on the reservation is good access to four lane interstates. The reservation is within easy driving distance to U. S. Highway 10 (36 miles), U.S. Highway 2 (23 miles), Interstate 94 (77 miles), and Interstate 29 (58 miles).

The only impediment to economic development regarding highway transportation is the current weight restrictions on US Highways 200 and II 3, both running east/west within the reservation. These restrictions inhibit both agricultural and forestry growth in the area.

- U. S. Federal Highways
 - Hwy. 59--2 lane
- State Highways
 - MN 113--2 lane
 - MN 200--2 lane

Navigable Waterways: None

Air:

The only airport on the reservation is a grass landing strip just south of the City of Mahnomen alone, US Highway 59. Unfortunately, the airport does not currently allow for landings by jets or larger planes, and, as such, is not significant factor with regards to economic development.

The reservation, however, is within driving distance of two key system airports with regular, daily commuter flights. These airports are located in Bemidji (60 miles northeast), and Fargo, N.D. (70 miles southwest).

- Nearest Commercial Airport is Hector International Airport at Fargo, N.D.
- Non-Commercial Airports are located at Mahnomen, MN and Detroit Lakes, MN
- Air Freight Carriers: Northwest Airlines
- Motor Freight Carriers: Winter Truck Line and Ingebrigtsen Paul Trucking
- Bus Service is accessed through Greyhound Bus Company located in Detroit Lakes, MN

Public Transit:

Transit within rural areas presents a difficult challenge. Income levels and poverty status force residents who wish to access jobs, health services, retail centers and recreational activities to rely on personal vehicles or to borrow a friend's or relative's vehicle. Vehicles are often unreliable and the cost of gasoline and maintaining the vehicle are high. Irregular attendance at work, because of transportation difficulties, causes job loss and high turn-over for the employer.

Public transit is offered on the White Earth Reservation by Becker and Mahnomen Counties Public Transit Systems. These transit systems primarily provide dial-a-ride services on Monday through Friday basis and unfortunately, cannot meet the needs of all persons who would like to access transit services.

The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council received an ear-mark of \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2005 from Congress. This money will be used for a Transit Center and for four buses.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The incorporated cities and some of the communities on the reservation are currently served by fiber optic routes and digital switching. All populations on the reservation are not currently served by telecommunications, however. The importance of telecommunication is growing, particularly in rural areas. The growth in the communication industry will allow companies to locate in rural areas as the need for transportation decreases in importance.

Local Telephone Servers: U.S. West; Twin Valley/Ulen Telephone Company Callaway Telephone Company; East Ottertail Garden Valley

Long Distance Providers: MCI; Sprint; ATT; U.S. West

Local Community Internet Access: Twin Valley/Ulen Telephone Company

Cable Television: Tekstar Cablevision from Detroit Lakes

Express Mail Service: UPS; Federal Express-, Priority Mail through US Post Office

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:

Currently, residents on the White Earth Reservation are served by six different schools districts. They are:

- School District #164 Bagley, which includes Rice Lake
- School District #432 Mahnomen
- School District #22 Detroit Lakes
- School District #601 Fosston
- School District #309 Park Rapids, which includes Pine Point
- School District #435 Waubun, which includes White Earth
- Tribal Schools = Circle of Life School K - 12 and the Pine Point School

A large majority of American Indian students are served by Bagley, Mahnomen, and Waubun School Districts. Students are evenly distributed amongst the three districts. Each of the districts offer programs from pre-school through the twelfth grade, including special education and alternative education courses.

Residents of the White Earth Reservation also have access to a wide variety of higher education opportunities. Liberal Arts Colleges located within 75 miles include Moorhead State University, Concordia College, the University of North Dakota, Bemidji State University, and the University of Minnesota--Crookston. In addition, technical colleges are located throughout the area through the Northwest Technical College system. The closest of the technical colleges is located in Detroit Lakes, within 30 miles of the reservation to the south.

Industry specific job training is also available through the customized training centers of the Northwest Technical College System. General job training is available through a variety of sources, including Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, area extension services, local community education programs and, in some cases, local school districts.

There is a large disparity in proficiency scores for Indian and white students attending reservation schools in the state tests for reading and math. This information was released by the Minnesota Department of Education in August, 2005, for test scores in the 2004-2005 school year.

STUDENTS SCORING “PROFICIENT” OR BETTER ON STATE TESTS - 2005

	MATH		READING	
	<i>White</i>	<i>Amer. Indian</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Amer. Indian</i>
Bagley School District				
<i>Bagley Elem. School</i>	74%	74%	75%	60%
<i>Bagley High School</i>	78%	44%	86%	67%
Detroit Lakes School District				
<i>Callaway Elem. School</i>	87%	85%	80%	85%
<i>Detroit Lakes Middle School</i>	80%	61%	76%	64%
<i>Detroit Lakes High School</i>	77%	63%	80%	71%
Mahnomen School District				
<i>Mahnomen Elem. School</i>	78%	64%	74%	65%
<i>Mahnomen High School</i>	74%	47%	74%	55%
<i>Naytahwaush Elem. School</i>	n/a	65%	n/a	61%
Waubun School District				
<i>Ogema Elem. School</i>	100%	60%	91%	68%
<i>Waubun Elem. School</i>	81%	56%	75%	44%
<i>Waubun High School</i>	74%	49%	73%	56%

Source: Department of Education in August of 2005, and reflects scores for the 2004-2005 school year.

State of Minnesota Department of Education provided data from the Minnesota Basic Skills Tests for 1998-2004 for Indian and non-Indian students that reflected similar information.

MINNSOTA BASIC SKILLS TEST RESULTS – 1998-2004

Mathematics Passing Rate for Eighth Grade Students

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
White Students	76%	75%	77%	77%	80%	78%	78%
Native Students	39%	38%	42%	43%	46%	43%	43%

Reading Passing Rate for Eighth Grade Students

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
White Students	72%	80%	84%	84%	86%	87%	87%
Native Students	38%	48%	53%	56%	54%	59%	56%

Source: Department of Education

These scores, as well as, high Native American student drop-out rate from schools indicate a severe problem that is of concern to Tribal government and parents.

2003-2004 DROPOUTS BY DISTRICT – GRADES 7-12

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL DROPOUTS	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE	% OF DISTRICT REPRESENTED BY NATIVE STUDENTS	% OF DROPOUTS THAT ARE NATIVE AMERICAN
Detroit Lakes	15	7	8	11.67%	46.67%
Frazee-Vergas	5	2	3	7.13%	40.00%
Bagley	5	2	3	23.43%	40.00%
Park Rapids	39	14	24	6.72%	35.90%
Mahnomen	17	17	0	62.64%	100.00%
Waubun	4	4	0	66.39%	100.00%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education – Office of Information Technologies

Head Start:

The White Earth Reservation operates five Head Start sites with eight classrooms, six home visitors and contract with three Family Child Care Centers on the reservation to provide Head Start Services to three to five year olds. They serve 214 children on the Reservation.

MEDICAL FACILITIES:

Access to health care facilities is becoming a major problem to remote, rural communities and, as such, health care facilities are a major asset in regards to economic development.

Residents of the White Earth Reservation are served by a number of health care providers. Most residents are served by the Indian Health Services Clinics, which are located in White Earth, Naytahwaush, and Pine Point. In addition to Indian Health Clinic Services, residents have access to two community hospitals, three private medical clinics, seven dentists, four eye clinics, and very limited county health services.

The following is a summary of services available to the White Earth Reservation through Indian Health Services:

Inpatient Care Services:

These are currently delivered to the White Earth residents through contracts made with local hospitals surrounding the reservation. These services are purchased by third party payments (such as Medical Assistance or Medicare) as well as with IHS contract dollars. While St. Mary's Hospital in Detroit Lakes is utilized most often, other frequently contracted facilities include: Clearwater County Memorial Hospital in Bagley, MN, Fosston Municipal Hospital, Fosston, MN, Mahnomen County and Village Hospital in Mahnomen, and St. Joseph's Hospital in Park Rapids. Other inpatient services are acquired at Bemidji, Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Rochester, MN. and Fargo, North Dakota. A few individuals are required to travel hundreds of miles to obtain specialty inpatient services.

Extended Care Services:

These services are available on the reservation at Mahnomen. Nursing homes routinely utilized by residents are also located in Detroit Lakes and Park Rapids.

Ambulatory Patient Care Service:

These are provided at three locations on the reservation. IHS operates a daily outpatient clinic in White Earth, which serves as the Service Unit Headquarters, as well as, the home base for all ambulatory care, community health services, and administrative staff. Personnel from this facility also staff the satellite health stations located in Ponsford (Pine Point) and Naytahwaush.

Community Health Services:

These services are provided to extend health care and health related activities through community based operations. The prevention-oriented services offered through this benefit package provide the true public health dimension to the White Earth Service Unit program. As such, they serve to support the clinical services through identification, referral, tracking, follow-up and the development of special resources and home care programs.

In addition to the Indian Health Service, the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council operates health services through its health and human services program.

Health services offered include:

- Tribal Health Service Administration
- Community Health Nursing (CHN)
- Social Service/Mental Health Service
- Health Education Services
- Home Health Agency
- Tribal Emergency Medical Service (EMS)
- Chemical Dependency Program
- Community Health Representatives (CHR)

ENERGY:

The White Earth Reservation has ample sources of energy. The reservation receives its electrical power generally through Otter Tail Power Company and Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, which is part of the MinnKota Power System. Otter Tail Power serves the cities of Mahanomen, Callaway, Waubun and Bejou, with the remainder of the reservation served by Wild Rice Electric Cooperative, Itasca Mantrap Electric Cooperative and Clearwater Polk Electric Cooperative.

The abundant low sulfur coal in North Dakota is a major fuel used by large companies to produce electrical power. Generally, the only time larger plants are dependent on non-coal fuels is during peak demand periods. The coal reserves are estimated to last well into the 21st century at even an increased rate of production. There appears to be enough electric power available now or planned for in the future to accommodate substantial economic growth in the region.

No community on the White Earth Reservation is served by natural gas. Lack of available natural gas is a serious impediment to economic development on the reservation.

HOUSING:

Recent studies by the Headwaters Regional Development Commission have found that there is a very critical need for new quality and affordable housing on the White Earth Reservation. A substantial portion of the reservation's current housing units are substandard, and the need for quality housing is both for rental as well as owner-occupied housing units.

The White Earth Housing Authority has constructed 3')I low-rent and mutual help homes in Rice Lake, Naytahwaush, Pine Point, White Earth, Callaway, Elbow Lake, Mahnomen and Callaway over the years. Seventy homes are presently under construction.

The 1996 Housing Improvement Program Consolidated Housing Inventory indicates that there are: 1, 1 20 units on the Reservation occupied by Native Americans, 680 are in standard condition, 437 are substandard, 245 need renovation, 192 need replacement, 415 families need housing and 607 new units are required.

June 1996 - The Indian Housing Authority has 431 units with 20 under construction and a waiting list of 332 families.

Indian housing is inferior to that of other Minnesota's, resources are not available and lending institutions are very reluctant to loan money to Native Americans on Tribal lands.

Resources that are available for Native American housing are: the Indian Housing Authority home buyer and rental program, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Housing Corporation, the Section 184 HUD Home Loan Guarantee Program, the Section 248 Federal Housing Administration Home Loan Program and the Native American Veteran Direct Home Loan Program with the Veterans Administration. All of these programs have income requirements and often times that is a deterrent for Native Americans that want to become homeowners.

INDUSTRIAL SITES:

There is one industrial park located on the White Earth Reservation. With the help of the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council, the City of Mahnomen recently completed construction on a 58-acre industrial park. The park, located just off Highway 59 on the east side of town features a 10-ton road, storm and sanitary sewer services, water service and curb and gutter. Construction was completed in August, 1995.